

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 ACDA-12 AGRE-00 AID-05 CEA-01

CEQ-01 CG-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DLOS-09 DODE-00

DOTE-00 EB-08 EPA-01 SOE-02 DOE-15 FMC-01 TRSE-00

H-01 INR-10 INT-05 IO-13 JUSE-00 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 NSF-01 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-05 SP-02 SS-15

ICA-11 EUR-12 /158 W

-----044548 250134Z /73

R 242130Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY SUVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7305

INFO AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 SUVA 0670

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PLOS, EFIS, FJ, XP

SUBJECT: SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONAL FISHERIES AGENCY

REF: A) STATE 95661, B) SUVA 0600

1. SUMMARY: DURING TWO DAY VISIT TO SUVA, FISHERIES TEAM ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR CONDON MET WITH OFFICIALS OF GOF, SPEC, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, UK AND FRANCE. WHILE IT IS OBVIOUS GOF AND OTHERS ARE IN PROCESS OF REVIEWING POSITION WITH REGARD TO FORMATION OF THE ORGANIZATION, WHAT WAS DESCRIBED AS REVERSAL OF GOF POSITION SEEMS TO BE MORE SPECULATIVE THINKING BY GOF OFFICIALS AS TO HOW TO ACCOMPLISH OBJECTIVES THAN TRUE CHANGE OF POSITION. SPEC OFFICIALS DO NOT CONSIDER JUNE MEETING TO BE IN JEOPARDY, ALTHOUGH THEY DO NOT BELIEVE IT WILL BE CONCLUSIVE. STATUS OF DEPENDENT TERRITORIES IN NEW AGENCY IS ISSUE OF CONCERN TO BOTH SPEC AND GOF. END SUMMARY.

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2. DURING LUNCH (20 APRIL) WITH HIGH COMMISSIONERS OF UK, AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND, AS WELL AS FRENCH CHARGE, DISCUSSION CENTERED AROUND DEPENDENT TERRITORIES ISSUE. AUSTRALIAN HICOM BRIEFED GROUP ON RECENT SPEC MEETING WHERE CRITERIA FOR MEMBERSHIP IN SPEC AND FORUM WERE DISCUSSED. HE REPORTED SPEC HAS DECIDED TO LIBERALIZE RULES FOR MEMBERS-

SHIP IN SPEC COMMITTEE TO ALLOW PARTICIPATION IN SPECIAL ACTIVITIES BY DEPENDENT TERRITORIES WITHOUT BEING REQUIRED TO SIGN SPEC AGREEMENT, WHILE AT SAME TIME TIGHTENING UP FORUM CRITERIA TO ENSURE THAT FORUM ITSELF REMAINED A POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING BODY. GROUP WAS VERY INTERESTED IN RECENT DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES SIGNED BY US AND MICRONESIAN REPS., AND WHETHER MICRONESIA MIGHT BE ADMITTED TO SPEC. BELIEVE TIMING OF VISIT BY AMBASSADOR ROSENBLATT MOST FORTUITIOUS, AND AMBASSADOR CONDON INFORMED THE GROUP THAT THEY WILL HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET AMBASSADOR ROSENBLATT AND BE BRIEFED ON HILO MEETING.

3. AUSTRALIAN HICOM REPORTED THAT SOLOMONS ISLAND REP. TO RECENT SPEC MEETING RAISED SPRFA ISSUE, EVEN THOUGH IT WAS NOT ON AGENDA, DURING MORE RAPID PROGRESS IN NEGOTIATIONS AND SETTING UP OF INTERIM AGENCY. APPARENTLY SPEC HAS RECEIVED MORE PLEDGES OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR INTERIM AGENCY AND AUSTRALIAN HICOM WAS OF OPINION THAT THE GOA WOULD RELEASE THE 100 THOUSAND DOLLARS THEY HAD PLEDGED, AND BEGIN SETTING UP OF INTERIM AGENCY IN CRONULLA SHORTLY. GROUP WAS OF UNANIMOUS OPINION THAT GNZ SHOULD BE URGED TO MAKE CRIS BEEBE AVAILABLE FOR JUNE MEETING AND ALL AGREED TO MAKE REPRESENTATIONS TO THAT EFFECT.

4. TEAM MET WITH WINSTON THOMSON, PERMANENT SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES AND MEMBERS OF HIS STAFF
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21 APRIL. GOF OFFICIALS LISTENED ATTENTIVELY TO US PRESENTATION AND SIGNALLED AGREEMENT WITH POINTS MADE. THOMSON STATED THAT THE FISHERIES OFFICIALS HAD FOLLOWED THE SPRFA NEGOTIATIONS CLOSELY, BELIEVED FORMATION OF SPRFA WAS DESIRABLE, AND SUPPORTED US PARTICIPATION. THOMSON INDICATED THAT HE WAS NOT IN POSITION TO PUT FORWARD GOF POSITION ON ISSUES, BECAUSE FOREIGN MINISTRY IS ASSERTING EXCLUSIVE JURISDICTION IN THAT REGARD. FOLLOWING MEETING, HE INDICATED PRIVATELY THAT FISHERIES MINISTRY HAD MADE RECOMMENDATIONS TO FOREIGN OFFICE, BUT THAT POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS SEEMED TO BE OVERRIDING AT PRESENT. HE WAS AWARE OF GOF POSITIONS REPORTED REFTEL B AND CHARACTERIZED IT AS A "LOT OF FOOLISHNESS" WHICH HE HOPED WOULD SOON PASS.

5. ON ISSUE OF SUBSTANCE WHICH WAS VERY MUCH ON MIND OF FISHERIES OFFICIALS WAS FATE OF 30 - 40 TAIWANESE FLAG LONG LINE VESSELS WHICH FISH FOR FIJIAN CANNERY. VESSELS FISH IN NZ ZONE, AND GOF IS APPARENTLY CONSIDERING CHANGING VESSELS TO FIJIAN FLAG BUT DOMESTIC CONSIDERATIONS HAVE PREVENTED ACTION SO FAR. GOF OFFICIALS WERE AWARE THAT US HAS SIMILAR SITUATION WITH VESSELS OPERATING OUT OF AMERICAN

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SAMOA AND PROBED TEAM AS TO WHETHER WE WERE TAKING SIMILAR
STEPS, TO WHICH WE PLEADED IGNORANCE. GOF OFFICIALS REQUESTED
TECHNICAL INFORMATION TO ASSIST IN THEIR EFFORTS TO SWAY GOF
POSITION ON SPRFA, WHICH TEAM PROMISED TO UNDERTAKE TO PROVIDE.

6. MEETING WITH PERMANENT FOREIGN SECRETARY JIOJI KOTOBALAVU
(JK) CONFIRMED ASSESSMENT REF B THAT JK IS INDEED "KITE
FLYING" IN CONVERSATIONS WITH VARIOUS US AND OTHER OFFICIALS.
UPSHOT OF JK'S SOMEWHAT CONFUSED PRESENTATION WAS THAT HE
IS PREPARING A REVIEW OF GOF POSITION OF SPRFA FOR PRIME
MINISTER'S CONSIDERATION WHICH HE HOPES WILL ULTIMATELY
RESULT IN BROAD RECONSIDERATION OF ORIGINAL FORUM DECISION
WHICH LED TO PORT MORESBY DECLARATION. HE BELIEVES DRAFT
SPRFA TREATY DOES NOT MEET GUIDELINES SET OUT BY FORUM,
NOR DOES IT PROTECT FIJI'S INTERESTS.

6. INTERESTINGLY, HE IS LEANING STRONGLY TOWARD VIEW THAT
REAL PROBLEM IS FORMATION OF SINGLE BODY TO DEAL WITH BOTH
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HIGHLY MIGRATORY AND COASTAL SPECIES. HE WOULD PREFER TWO SEPARATE ORGANIZATIONS WITH DIFFERENT MEMBERS AND DIFFERENT MANDATES. CONTINUALLY REFERRING TO TUNA AS A "HIGH SEAS RESOURCE", HE SAID CATEGORICALLY THAT FIJI WOULD NOT SUPPORT A TUNA ORGANIZATION THAT DID NOT INCLUDE THE US, AND FOR THAT MATTER, JAPAN AND OTHER DISTANT WATER FISHERS. FOR COASTAL SPECIES, ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIP COULD INCLUDE ONLY FORUM COUNTRIES. A RELATED PROBLEM, IN JK'S VIEW, IS THAT OF REPRESENTATION BY DEPENDENT TERRITORIES. FIJI, LIKE OTHER PACIFIC NATIONS, WANTS MAXIMUM PARTICIPATION BY TERRITORIES, BUT UNDERSTANDS PROBLEM INHERENT IN SEATING THE IN SPRFA. ALL THIS LEADS JK TO VIEW THAT THERE SHOULD BE FORMED SEPARATE TUNA ORGANIZATION UNDER AUSPICES OF SPC, WHERE DEPENDENT TERRITORIES ARE ALREADY SEATED SEPARATELY, WHERE US PARTICIPATION IS ASSURED, AND WHERE FORUM COUNTRIES CANNOT OBJECT TO EXPANDING MEMBERSHIP TO INCLUDE JAPAN AND OTHERS. IN HIS VIEW USING SPC FOR THIS PURPOSE WOULD ALSO TEND TO REMOVE STIGMA OF "COLONIALISM" FROM SPC AND MAKE FINANCING LESS OF A PROBLEM. AT SAME TIME POLITICAL INTEGRITY OF SPEC WOULD BE MAINTAINED BY USING IT TO HOUSE SECOND BODY.

7. DURING DISCUSSION TEAM POINTED OUT THAT WHILE SEPARATE ORGANIZATIONS MADE SENSE FROM MANAGEMENT VIEWPOINT, WE QUESTIONED ACCEPTABILITY OF IDEA BY OTHER NATIONS WHO WOULD VIEW IDEA AS DILUTION OF THEIR JURISDICTION OVERTURE. JK RESPONDED THAT IF FORUM LEADERS UNDERSTAND THAT SPRFA, AS ENVISAGED, WAS DILUTING POLITICAL INTEGRITY OF FORUM/SPEC SYSTEM, AND THAT SEPARATE ORGANIZATION WOULD RESULT IN SAME PRACTICAL RESULT REGARDING BENEFITS FROM TUNA FISHING AT A FINANCIAL SAVINGS, THEY WOULD FAVOR THIS SOLUTION. AT LEAST HE BELIEVED THEY HAD TO BE GIVEN THE CHOICE. JK REPEATEDLY URGED US TO BE AS FORTHCOMING AS POSSIBLE REGARDING REPRESENTATION BY DEPENDENT TERRITORIES, CONFIDENTIAL

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REGARDLESS OF OUTCOME OF GOF SPONSORED REVIEW.

8. HE ATTACKED GPNG TWO TREATY APPROACH, STATING THAT IT ONLY PROTECTED THE FORUM MEMBERS FROM THEMSELVES, AND SEEMED TO BE MORE IN FAVOR OF A GENERAL DISCLAIMER CLAUSE. FROM HIS COMMENTARY, HE WAS AWARE THAT NAURU HAD ALSO ATTACKED PROPOSAL, AND LEFT IMPRESSION THAT GOF MAY HAVE PROMPTED NAURU LETTER TO SPEC. COMMENT: IT IS OBVIOUS THAT GOF IS ATTEMPTING TO WALK A TIGHT ROPE BETWEEN ITS DISTANT WATER FISHING INTERESTS AND ITS POSITION AS A FORUM MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING. WE DO NOT BELIEVE GOF SOLUTION WILL BE ACCEPTABLE TO FORUM MEMBERSHIP, ALTHOUGH IT WOULD CERTAINLY GIVE US NO PROBLEMS. DANGER IS THAT STRONG GOF PUSH FOR RECONSIDERATION OF SPRFA MIGHT STALL NEGOTIATIONS INDEFINITELY, AND PERHAPS BE VIEWED BY OTHER COUNTRIES AS U.S. INITIATIVE

BEING PUT FORWARD THROUGH FIJI. IT IS EQUALLY OBVIOUS THAT JK IS NOT BE DETERRED IN HIS EFFORTS, AND THAT HE WILL COMMUNICATE SOMETHING ALONG THESE LINES TO SPEC AND OTHERS. IN ANY EVENT, CONVERSATION REVEALED THAT GOF IS STRONG ALLY FOR US PARTIIPATION IN AN ORGANIZATION WHICH WOULD MANAGE TUNA IN REGION. OUR ONLY DIFFERENCES ON THIS POINT MAY BE IN HOW TO TACTICALLY ACHIEVE THE DESIRED RESULT.

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9. TEAM MET WITH SPEC DIRECTOR MAHE TUPOUNIUA AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR R. GATES. SPEC OFFICIALS EXPRESSED "ENCOURAGEMENT" AT US ATTEMPTS TO OBTAIN FUNDING FOR AGENCY AND STATED THIS WOULD BE WELL RECEIVED AS A COMMITMENT ON PART OF US TO SUCCESS OF SPRFA EFFORT. THEY ALSO STATED TWO TREATY APPROACH WAS IN SOME TROUBLE AND THAT FURTHER DISCUSSION OF ISSUE WAS INDICATED. GATES WAS SUPPORTIVE OF TEAM VISITS TO VARIOUS CAPITALA AND RECOMMENDED WE "SPREAD IDEAS AROUND PACIFIC" SINCE MANY GOVERNMENTS WERE RECEIEWING POSITIONSMAHE STATED THAT MANY GOVERNMENTS WERE JUST BEGINNING TO WAKE UP TO IMPLICATIONS OF SPRGA, AND IN PARTICULAR ISSUES RELATING TO MANAGEMENT OF HIGHLY MIGRATORY TUNA. TEAM SENT OVER US LEGISLATION RELATING TO ISSUE, AND EXPLAINED HOW SPRGA COULD ULTIMATELY RESOLVE MANY OF PROBLEMS ISLAND GOVERNMENTS WERE CONCERNED ABOUT.

10. SPEC OFFICIALS QUESTIONED US AT SOE LENGTH ABOUT THE
DEPDENENT TERRITIRIEOS AND AGGRESSIVELY INQUIRED ABOUT THE
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TERRITORIES' ABILITY TO BENEFIT DIRECTLY FROM THEIR SEA
RESOURCES. THIS PROMPTED AMB. CONDON TO ASK WHETHER THE SPEC
INQUIRIES ARE INSPIRED BY A SPEC INTERPRETATION THAT THE
FORUM LEADERS HAD INTENDED THE SPRFA AS AN INSTRUMENT AND NOT
AS A SERIOUS EFFORT TO MANAGE VALUABLE SEA RESOURCES ON A
REGIONAL BASIS. WHILE SPEC DIRECTOR QUICKLY AGREED WITH
SECOND ALTERNATIVE DEPUTY DIRECTOR ATTEMPTED AT FIRST TO
SUGGEST THAT BOTH PURPOSES WERE PRESENT BUT PULLED BACK AND
AGREED WITH HIS DIRECTOR.

11. SPEC OFFICIALS DO NOT BELIEVE JUNE MEETING IS IN ANY
DANGER, ALTHOUGH THEY DO NOT PLAN FOR IT TO BE A MEETING
OF PLENIPOTENTIARIES.

12. TEAM ALSO MET WITH FAO COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVE BLUMENFLD
AND UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH PACIFIC MARINE RESOURCES STAFF TO
DISCUSS IN GENERAL TERMS VARIOUS PROGRAMS IN REGION.
BLUMENFELD STATED OFFICIAL FAO INVOLVEMENT IN SPRFA
WAS NEGLIGIBLE, ALTHOUGH THEY WERE INTERESTED.

13. THE AMBASSADOR ACCOMPANIED TEAM IN ALL THEIR MEETINGS.

14. COMMENT: OVERALL, BELIEVE SUVA DISCUSSIONS WERE USEFUL
AND SUCCESSFUL IN EXPLAINING US POSITIONS AND DEMONSTRATING
US COMMITMENT TO SUCCESS OF EFFORT. IT APPEARS, HOWEVER,
THAT GOF, AND PROBABLY OTHERS, WANT TO SLOW EFFORT DOWN
SOMEWHAT TO ALLOW REFLECTION ON ISSUES. IT MAY BE THAT SPEC
COMMENT ON JUNE MEETING REFLECTS DESIRE TO HAVE ISSUE CONSIDERED
IN DETAIL AT SEPT. FORUM MEETING, ALTHOUGH NOT TO EXTENT
GOF ENVISAGES.

15. EMBASSY WISHES TO POINT TO AN ADDITIONAL COMPLICATING
FACTOR WHICH IS THE APPARENT ABSENCE OF STRONG LEADERSHIP IN
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THE AREA TO COORDINATE THE POINTS OF VIEW OF THE VARIOUS
ISLAND AND KEEP THEM PULLING IN THE SAME DIRECTION.
THE POSSIBIOITY HAS BEEN RAISED OF THE FORUM LEADERS MEETING
BEFORE JUNE TO PUT THE ISLANDS ON THE SAME WAVELENGTH BUT
DOUBTFUL THAT THERE IS ENOUGHT TIME TO PREPARE FOR SUCH
A MEETING AT THIS LATE DATE.

16. THERE IS OBVIOUSLY VERY LITTLE THAT US CAN OR SHOULD BE
DOING OTHER THAN VISIT SUCH AS THE BUSBY TEAM JUST COMPLETED
SUCCESSFULLY IN SUVA. IN FACT THE EMBASSY COMMENDS BUSBY
AND HIS TEAM FOR THE SKILL AND COMPETENCE WITH WHICH THEY
HANDLED THE VARIED AUDIENCES TO WHICH THEY WERE EXPOSED. THEY
WERE THOROUGHLY PROFESSIONAL AND SERVED WELL THE PURPOSE FOR
WHICH THEY WERE WELCOME IN SUVA.
CONDON

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